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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/889,484	12/20/2001	Norio Maeda	32254M009	4063

7590 08/12/2004

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EXAMINER

O MALLEY, KATHRYN S

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3749

DATE MAILED: 08/12/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/889,484	MAEDA ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Kathryn S. O'Malley	3749

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 June 2004.
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) 7-10 and 15-17 is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-6 and 11-14 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 18 July 2001 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>3/25/04, 4/13/04</u> .	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments, see page 14 of the Remarks, filed 19 February 2004, with respect to Examiner's objection to the specification for stating that "nozzle 5 injects drying fluid in a horizontal direction" in the Office Action of 19 September 2003 have been fully considered and are persuasive. The objection has been withdrawn.
2. Applicant's arguments, see page 15 of the Remarks, filed 19 February 2004, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 1-6 under 35 USC 102(a) have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of Hamano, as detailed below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1, 4, and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent 09-213672 to Hamano, hereinafter referred to as Hamano.
5. Hamano teaches a method and apparatus for treating substrates comprising a substrate bath 1 holding cleaning fluid 10 and substrates 9;

injecting a drying fluid 11 into the chamber in a liquid condition using a nozzle thereby forming a layer of liquid drying fluid 11 on the upper surface of cleaning fluid 10; and lowering the fluid face of the fluids with respect to the substrates 9.

Note page 3, paragraphs 0021-0024 of the English translation and Figure 1.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 2, 3, 5, 6, and 12-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamano as applied to claims 1, 4, and 11 above, and further in view of US Patent 5,685,086 to Ferrell.

8. Hamano does not teach blowing an inert gas onto the layer of drying fluid or regulating the delivery rate of the fluid. Ferrell teaches a similar substrate drying method and apparatus comprising delivering an inert gas to interact with the drying fluid delivered to a substrate processing chamber (note column 4, lines 18-25) as well as varying the delivery of the drying fluid to the chamber (note column 6, lines 1-9). As Ferrell teaches that delivering an inert gas to the processing chamber and regulating the delivery of the drying fluid leads to improved drying of the substrates, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the substrate treating method and apparatus of Hamano with the delivery taught by Ferrell.

Allowable Subject Matter

9. Claims 7-10 and 15-17 are allowed.

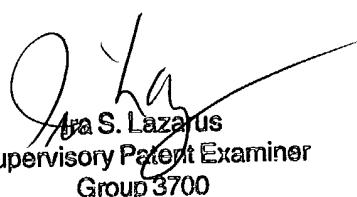
Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kathryn S. O'Malley whose telephone number is (703)308-2844. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (8:30-5:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ira Lazarus can be reached on (703)308-1935. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

KSO



Ira S. Lazarus
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Group 3700